

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 ISO-00 EB-07 COME-00 L-02 CIAE-00 INR-07

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R 101700Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6411

USDOC WASHDC

INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BEXP, EMIN, GB, US, SA

SUBJ: BELINGA, BETHLEHEM AND SAUDI ARABIA

USDOC FOR STEPHEN CONGER

1. MINISTER OF STATE FOR MINES MBOUY-BOUTZIT APPROACHED AMBASSADOR MAY 9 WITH FOLLOWING PROPOSITION. HE SAID THAT THE SAUDI ARABIAN GOVERNMENT WISHES TO BUILD A VERY LARGE STEEL PLANT IN SAUDI ARABIA FOR WHICH THEY WILL PURCHASE GABONESE IRON ORE. THEY INSIST, HOWEVER, THAT A MAJOR U.S. STEEL COMPANY BUILD THE PLANT FOR THEM AND, SINCE BETHLEHEM IS SHAREHOLDER IN SOMIFER, THEY HAVE APPROACHED BETHLEHEM WITH PROPOSAL TO BUILD THEIR STEEL PLANT IN SAUDI ARABIA.

2. IN PRELIMINARY CONTACTS IN PARIS LAST WEEK, DURING BOARD MEETING OF SOMIFER, BETHLEHEM (JORGE SCHNEIDER) INDICATED THAT BETHLEHEM IN SOMEWHAT DIFFICULT POSITION INASMUCH AS THEY HAD JUST RECENTLY TURNED DOWN A SIMILAR CONTRACT PROPOSED BY ALGERIA ON THE GROUNDS THAT, WITH THEIR CURRENT COMMITMENTS, BETHLEHEM SIMPLY COULD NOT SPARE THE NECESSARY EXPERTISE TO UNDERTAKE SUCH A PROJECT. MBOUY-BOUTZIT SAID THAT BETHLEHEM REPS NEVERTHELESS AGREED TO GIVE FURTHER CONSIDERATION TO

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PROPOSAL.

3. MBOUY-BOUTZIT POINTED OUT THAT THIS PROPOSAL  
EXTREMELY IMPORTANT TO GABON FOR FOLLOWING TWO REASONS:  
(A) THIS WOULD ENABLE GABON TO SELL LARGE QUANTITIES  
OF ITS IRON TO SAUDI ARABIA AND (B) HE WAS CONVINCED THAT  
AS SOON AS BETHLEHEM AGREED TO PROPOSAL (WHICH WOULD IMPLY  
OPENING OF BELINGA MINE) JAPANESE WOULD IMMEDIATELY AGREE  
ALSO TO PURCHASE GABONESE IRON ORE. ACCORDING TO MBOUY-  
BOUTZIT, JAPANESE MERELY WAITING FOR AN INDICATION OF  
BETHLEHEM'S INTENTIONS BEFORE COMMITTING THEMSELVES.

4. MBOUY-BOUTZIT ASKED AMBASSADOR THAT HE PASS THIS  
INFORMATION ON TO WASHINGTON AND HE HOPED THAT USG COULD  
BE HELPFUL IN CONVINCING BETHLEHEM TO ACCEPT SAUDI ARABIAN  
OFFER.

5. AS A FINAL ARGUMENT, MBOUY-BOUTZIT COMMENTED THAT A  
MAJOR DEAL OF THIS KIND TYING SAUDI ARABIA, THE U.S. AND  
GABON TOGETHER WOULD ALSO BE EXCELLENT FOR POLITICAL  
REASONS.

6. EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE BEING INFORMED OF ANY  
RESULTS OF ANY FOLLOW-UP WITH BETHLEHEM IN U.S.

7. DECONTROL UPON RECEIPT.  
MCKESSON

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** IRON, STEEL, PRODUCTION, INDUSTRIAL PLANTS, TRADE AGREEMENTS  
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**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 10 MAY 1975  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
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